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Notes of the Month.

We have gleaned from a copy of "The Christian Register," the leading Unitarian religious weekly in America, several items of information that seem to indicate considerable activity there amongst our brethren in the faith. The Unitarian Laymen's Organisation is in possession of very handsome buildings in Boston, which they are determined to make serviceable to our community. An increasing membership testifies to their social characteristics, while some of their number have contributed money to make it possible for "The Christian Register" to be sent for two months to every Unitarian household. Further, frequent largely-attended meetings of the laity have considered other ways and means of stimulating thought and endeavour on behalf of the Liberal faith. Another announcement of interest to us is the welcome to be given to the Rev. W. H. Drummond, who is in the United States, to set before American Unitarians his impressions of the Hungarian difficulties. We wish him every success and encouragement in his visit.

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Thanks largely due to the visit of the Rev. E. I. Fripp, B.A., the Domestic Mission annual gatherings proved very successful. The Lecture on the Monday will be the means of a gratifying addition to the Mission funds. We were glad to learn at the Annual Meeting that a successor had been found to the Rev. F. Woolley as Missionary. This is Mr. J. Harold Smith, of Birmingham, who hopes to begin his duties in April. He is the nephew of two English Unitarian ministers, the Rev. H. Bodell Smith and the Rev. A. Cobden Smith, both of whom have done good work in English pulpits. The Missionary-elect has had practical experience of mission work in Birmingham under the Rev. Charles Thrift, who was formerly Missionary in Belfast. We are therefore hopeful that Mr. J. Harold Smith will make a very successful addition to the number of worthy men who made Stanhope Street a centre of useful Christian endeavour in the past.

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Many persons must have learned with deep regret that Dr. Robert Campbell, who was Chairman at the Mission Annual Meeting, was soon after overtaken by serious illness. His condition was such as to cause grave anxiety to his relatives and numerous friends, but we are glad to report that his condition has since shown marked improvement, and at the time of

writing is promising well for his recovery to active health. We heartily sympathise with his relatives in their time of anxiety, but trust that from now onwards they may have their strongest hopes realised.

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The Ulster Unitarian Christian Association will hold its Annual Services and Meeting on April 18th and 19th. It will be of interest to readers to learn that the special preacher will be the Rev. C. M Wright, of Liverpool. Some will remember the ministry of his father, the Rev. J. J. Wright, at Mountpottinger, and to others his editorship of "Young Days" made his name familiar. But not alone for his father's sake, but also for his own, we hope for him a very hearty welcome when he comes to Belfast. The services will be held in the First Church, Belfast, on the 18th inst., the Annual Meeting the following evening in the Centra Hall. * *

We have heard with regret of the death of Mrs. Humphry Ward, who, not only as a writer of fiction, but as one who had sympathies with Liberal religion, was well known to many members of our religious body. On several occasions she took part in our denominational gatherings, and her best known book, "Robert Elsmere," did even more to help the cause of undogmatic religion. She thus continued the helpful influence which began with her grandfather, the famous Dr. Thomas Arnold, and continued by Matthew Arnold, her uncle. There are thousands of readers to whom her numerous works have given pleasure, and who will consequently miss this high-talented authress.

LIFE'S ADVENTURE.

It is perhaps a little late in the year to call attention to a Handbook for 1920, but "Life's Adventure," which is the National Adult School Union Handbook for 1920 is of permanent value and will be found of use apart from the dates of the various lessons contained. The scheme of study for the year is divided into three parts dealing respectively with "The Search for Truth," "The Search for Beauty," "The Search for Goodness." There is one lesson for each Sunday of the year.

For every lesson Bible references are given together with other references selected over a wide range of literature. There is a "keynote of thought," generally an apt quotation from the poets, and the aim of the lesson is set forth in a sentence. Then follow "Notes on the lesson" which are clear and rich in illustrative matter. No one could use this book without benefitting not only in religious knowledge but also in general culture. We can commend it most heartily to those who have classes of elder scholars.

SOCIAL REUNION IN DOWNPATRICK.

On Thursday, 18th March, in connection with the First Presbyterian Non-Subscribing Church, a Social Reunion was held in the Assembly Hall. Rev. R. Philipson, the minister presided. The distinctive feature of the evening was a presentation of a handsome drawing-room Chesterfield to Mr. S. C. N. Lowry, the Congregational Treasurer, on the occasion of his marriage. Mr. Hugh Dickson, Secretary, who made the presentation, was supported by Mr. J. Cochrane, Mr. Joseph Newman, and Mr. Thomas Kinnear. Mr. Lowry, in his reply, said veterans had been heard to boast of having lived in the reigns of four kings; he had served under four successive ministers—Revs. S. C. Nelson, D. Gordon, and M. S. Dunbar—all deceased, and, lastly, Mr. Philipson, with them since 1916, who was infusing fresh life into the Congregation. Looking back over the years, while they had lost heavily by death, there had also been many gains. The vitality of the Congregation was wonderfully maintained, and the subscriptions were still good. Book prizes for attendance were given to 59 scholars, and there was a most enjoyable programme, which included musical items and recitations from Mrs. Nelson Lowry, Mrs. T. Pickering, Misses Hulton, Mabel Moore, and A. Newman, Messrs. T. Hastings and S. Moore.

ONE HOLY CHURCH OF GOD.

There is much talk of Christian reunion in these days, though the prospects of the kind of reunion aimed at do not seem very bright. . . . . If there is to be real reunion it must be in that "Spirit of God wherein is liberty." In other words, the same spirit must show itself amidst great variety of opinion. Episcopal ordination must not be regarded as more sacred than any other kind. It is God who calls His children; they are made "a royal priesthood" by their lives, not by any half-mythical "Apostolical Succession" or any traditional "laying on of hands." It was men who made the various forms of ordination for the ministry according to the circumstances of the time. They may be and are useful; but they are not divine in the sense of "God-ordained." Hence no question must be raised on the "validity of orders." Discussion on such matters is a waste of time, when the world of men and women now more than ever needs saving in the true sense of that much abused word. The true meaning of "saving" is the healing of the soul from the sickness of selfishness and sin. These are manifest on every hand to-day from the hideous murders reported in every newspaper to the shameless "profiteering" among all classes and wherever there is an opportunity. That healing cannot be wrought by any organisation, however elaborate. Organisation as such is usually based upon compromise of one kind or the other. With sin and selfishness there can be no compromise in the faithful disciples of the Christ.

In any true reunion it is the spirit which counts. The various sects must realise once for all that each of them has one common aim. All the divers roads lead to holy living, or they are self-condemned. It is right and a matter of duty to be possessed with a missionary zeal for the spread of the truth as it presents itself to each of the sects. Indeed truth is born of differences of view and earnest seeking; but it must be conceded that each has the right to his own convictions, that not one way alone leads to heaven. Hence necessary controversy must not be marked by sectarian bitterness, but be prosecuted lovingly and in the spirit of our common Master. When we realise how closely his teaching was devoted to the needs and duties of every-day life, we can see the broad lines of any Christian union. Discipleship is of supreme moment; that must be recognised by its fruits in the individual life. Yet once recognised such a disciple must be admitted unhesitatingly into any other communion than his own, where he can feel at home and live as he ought and as he wishes to live. Unless such recognition can be secured, and the "Lord's table" be open to all, there is little hope of anything but an unreal reunion. Similarly the pulpit of each Church must be common to all. It must not be hedged round by a theological hedge of thorns.

When once the Christian Churches severally and as a whole become really possessed by the Spirit of God, there will be no need to talk of reunion; it will have come to pass. It is not to be expected that all will ever think alike. Christian conduct, or the attempt to secure it, is within the reach of all alike. That issuing from the Christian character is of the essence of "the kingdom of heaven," which we pray for often, as Jesus taught us to do, often enough without realising that our very prayer pledges us to help that kingdom to come. It will not come by organisation as such, by gorgeous ceremonial, by the plainness of the ritual and building, by creeds or confessions of faith. These have largely to do with opinion more than with truth, and as Sir Walter Raleigh says finely, "It is opinion that travelleth the world without a passport, and not truth." What is essential is a living perception of what makes up the kingdom, and a resolute purpose of fulfilling the needful requirements.

When that comes to pass, the Churches will inevitably be united in the common fight with sin and selfishness. Then, and not till then, will that "one holy church of God" appear, for which the world has long been waiting and praying.—"*The Christian Life.*"

PEACE AND HARMONY.

"In remembrance." Once again we gather round the table, old friends who have known each other for many a long year, and young men and women coming forward for the first time. Back in the pews young ones are waiting, half wondering what this unusual service means The older can tell of those who were preachers and members when they were young, and can recollect the time when greater accommodation was needed than now.

Time has wrought great changes since then. Many have died, some have become merged in other denominations, some have left the locality. Yet, though fewer now in perhaps most of our Congregations, the ordinance is continued, and the work goes on. Think none the less of it if only we are few, for they were few in the beginning. Is there earnestness and sincerity? Forget the present for a moment, and let it be the Master who presides, and watch Him as He glances round the table, and every one is welcome, every one is at home. No fanaticism, no primness or undue solemnity: everyone is natural and happy, and He speaks as to His household.

No need to read from Scripture when He is there, and the only prayer that we should want to hear is the Lord's Prayer said by Him. The old words live when He says them, and when He says: "Our Father" we are drawn into a close bond with Him and with each other. That one word "Father," as said by Him, conveys more to us of what God is and what we are than all the sermons we ever heard and all the books we ever read; and if while we are there He should have something to say to us we forget everybody else; each feels that it is "to me" He speaks. What matters now past folly, what matters any haunting shadow of past sin? It is all gone, wiped clean away, for the love that knows and understands and forgives has cleansed it all away. He stands on no pedestal, but comes near to us, and the little ones move out of the pews and come up beside Him and slip their hands into His, and His smile welcomes them. The air seems to pulse round us, to tingle with vibrations, and what are those presences that gather round about like a protecting wall—the angels of the Presence! Truly, this is none other than the house of God, the very gate of heaven.

And the work, done in His name, so slight, sometimes grudgingly—the Sunday School class, or the attendance at a service more as a duty than a pleasure, or anything else that we have done, because we belonged to the Church, now glows with new meaning, and we are glad that it has been done, and now we shall do more.

Shall we say a word, or think a thought, or do anything that in the least would mar His work. Now, unreservedly, we give ourselves anew to His work, for His work is to brighten the world with His presence, and "wherever my servant is, there am I also."

> "Waiting the Word of the Master,
> Watching the Hidden Light;
> Listening to catch his orders
> In the very midst of the fight."
>
> "Seeing His slightest signal
> Across the heads of the throng;
> Hearing His faintest whisper
> Above earth's loudest song."

Ullin.

BELFAST DOMESTIC MISSION.

Annual Meeting of Subscribers.

The Annual Meeting of subscribers and friends of the Belfast Domestic Mission was held in the Central Hall, Rosemary Street, Belfast, on the 9th March. Tea was served, after which Dr. Robert Campbell presided.

Rev. Mathew Watkins (Hon. Secretary) read the Annual Report dealing with the work of the Mission, and recording the resignation of Miss E. Bruce, who had been their energetic Hon. Secretary for many years, and the appointment of Mr. Watkins as successor.

The reports of the Provident Fund and the Treasurer's Statement were submitted respectively by Messrs. Hugh

Erskine and John M'Kenzie, and both were satisfactory.

The Chairman, in moving the adoption of the reports, said the Domestic Mission was one of the oldest—if not the oldest—in the City of Belfast. They had no foreign missions, but they had the Domestic Mission, which was most useful.

Rev. H. J. Rossington, M.A., B.D., in seconding, paid a tribute to their late Secretary, Miss Bruce, for her devoted services, and also to their Missionary, Rev. F. Woolley, who was leaving them to take some other work. They were deeply indebted to Mr. and Mrs. Woolley, and also to Mr. Norman Woolley, who rendered splendid service to the Mission during their long connection with it. The speaker went on to state that Mr. Woolley's successor, Mr. J. Harold Smith, of Birmingham, would take up his work on the second Sunday in April as the Domestic Missionary in Belfast. The Committee believed that the need for the Mission was as great at the present time as it was in 1853, when the Mission was founded. The prosperity which many people were enjoying was only fictitious. There would be continued poverty, and therefore from that point of view there would be need of the Mission to give charity in deserving cases, and more subscriptions for the support of the Mission in the future.

The resolution was passed.

On the motion of Rev. G. V. Crook, seconded by Mrs. Jackson, the members of the Ladies' Committee were re-elected, and also the members of the General Committee, the name of Miss Campbell being substituted for that of Miss Carmichael.

On the motion of Mr. Harold Thomas, seconded by Mr. C. J. M'Kisack, thanks were passed to Rev. Mr. Fripp for preaching the annual sermon and for the assistance he had given to the Mission.

Rev. E. I. Fripp, B.A., in acknowledging, spoke in favour of closer unity amongst the various Churches. They now lived in a period when division was a great weakness. They were face to face with the fact that Protestants were too much inclined to go apart on Sunday—the very day on which they should come together. It was not impossible for them to be united. If they laid more stress on the greater and less on the minor things they could come together and feel themselves one. Until they had that unity there would never be a real Christian and powerful Church.

Rev. F. Woolley moved a vote of thanks to the voluntary workers, and especially to Dr. M. B. Smyth, for their services. He congratulated those who had worked for the Mission, and hoped more workers would come forward to help them.

Mr. H. Erskine seconded the motion, which was passed.

Following a vote of thanks to the Chairman, the meeting concluded with the benediction.

THE SONNETS OF SHAKESPEARE.

LECTURE BY REV. EDGAR I. FRIPP.

A Lecture on "Shakespeare's Sonnets" was given on 8th March in the Central Hall, Rosemary Street, Belfast, by Rev. Edgar I. Fripp, B.A., of Altrincham. Rev. H. J. Rossington presided, and there was a large attendance.

The Chairman introduced the Lecturer, and said Mr. Fripp had volunteered to give this lecture on behalf of the Belfast Domestic Mission. He did not know if Mr. Fripp would solve the problems associated with the sonnets, but he would endeavour to bring out the poetic feeling in them which had appealed to thousands.

Rev. Edgar I. Fripp, who was cordially received, gave a historical sketch of the first publication of the sonnets, which he said were divided into three groups. He thought the first twenty-five were addressed to the young nobleman to whom the poet dedicated "Venus and Adonis" and "Lucrece"—namely, the young Earl of Southampton. They were full of conventional advice and charming affectionate flattery regarding the suggested marriage of the young nobleman to the

daughter of the Earl of Oxford—a match which would have been a splendid one for both parties, both socially and financially, but the youth hesitated, not being in love. The second set of sonnets—a hundred of them—belonged to a later time, and he suggested they were written at odd moments and in quiet hours in 1591 and 1592, and presented as a New Year gift to the Earl of Southampton on 1st January, 1593, when he was nineteen years of age. It was curious how Shakespeare in his gentle, tactful way lectured the young man, hinting plainly that he had vices which might undermine his virtues. The third group of sonnets were a miscellany which had a fantastic playing upon the name of "Will," an equally fantastic payment of uncomplimentary compliment to women, some poetic exercise, an allegory or two, and a reference to Marian's pretty story of Cupid and his torch. Proceeding, the Lecturer defended Shakespeare from the charge of having deserted his wife and children at Stratford in favour of the romantic "dark lady" at Court, and said there was not a vestige of evidence to support the story. He described the struggles of the great dramatic poet as an actor and playwright, quoted liberally from the sonnets, and, in conclusion, ventured the opinion that none of them were later than 1593 or 1594. The author's facility and fecundity of speech were astonishing. He revelled in words, having still to learn that restraint in expression, that marvellous terseness and packedness of speech which characterised his later and greater work. Nor had the sonnets the metrical flow and freedom and cadence of Shakespeare's verse of 1595 and onwards. Nor could he find in them that passion of love which burned and flowed in "Romeo and Juliet," written almost certainly in 1596, after the death of the poet's only son. There, and not in the sonnets, however interesting, seductive, and eloquent, was the mature and incomparable Shakespeare.

On the motion of Mr. C. J. M'Kisack, seconded by Rev. M. Watkins, a hearty vote of thanks was passed to the Lecturer.

Rev. Mr. Fripp, in replying, said he had never given that lecture before. There was no audience he knew of to whom he would speak of anything which was beautiful and dear to him rather than to them, and he thanked them for the kind way in which they had received him.

THE PERSISTENCE OF HALF-TIME.

The 1918 Education Act has been more than a year in force, and still one of the most valuable of its fruits remains ungathered. No day has been appointed as yet on which Clause 8, which abolishes the half-time system, shall be put in force throughout the country, and in consequence the evil of attempting to work children hard for part of the day and school them for the rest is still rampant. True, many enlightened authorities have chosen to forestall coercion in this matter, for figures now to hand show that Leeds, Nottingham, Sheffield, and Wigan, among other cities, have now no half-time scholars on their books, while Bradford, Hindley, and Lancaster have creditable decreases to boast of. The recalcitrants, as might be expected, are the rival cotton towns —Blackburn, Burnley, Preston, Oldham, Rochdale, and the rest. It is not failure to appreciate the ultimate value of the reform that holds them back, but a canny determination not to be first in a field that is expected immediately to handicap any that enters it alone. Thus the Rochdale authority—and Rochdale is the greatest sinner of the lot, with an increase in half-timers from 871 in 1915 to 1,219 in 1920—asserts with confidence that "the parents in Rochdale will acquiesce without a murmur in a national enforcement; but to abolish half-time in one town and not in another is the way to cause irritation." Many other authorities make the same plea for speedy general action. What deters the Government from taking it?—"Manchester Guardian."

LESSON NOTES FOR TEACHERS.

[To be used in accordance with the Scheme of instruction for 1920, issued by the Sunday School Committee of the N.S.P.C.I.]

4th April. Easter Lesson. Luke xxiv. 13-35. Key text, verse 26.

Whatever we may believe concerning the resurrection this fact remains beyond dispute—the disciples were somehow convinced that Jesus still lived and had made himself known to them. The earliest written account of the resurrection is that of St. Paul in I Corinthians xv., in which it is regarded as purely spiritual, "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." In the passage which immediately follows our lesson the resurrection is regarded as a physical resuscitation, the actual body of Jesus, "flesh and bones," standing in the midst of them. The two accounts cannot be reconciled. There are other difficulties and contradictions in the various accounts of the resurrection, but in our lesson for to-day these things are not of great importance.

The incident at Emmaus is recorded only in St. Luke's gospel, and the point of it is indicated in the key text, "Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?"

Two disciples (they were not apostles) were walking away from Jerusalem in the evening sadly confused by the tragic end of the mission of their Master, when they were confronted by one who asked them why they thus reasoned and were sad. So impressed were they with the apparent failure of that life which had ended with the crucifixion, that they could not recognise the Christ in one who could not see cause for doubt and sadness. They told him what had happened, thinking he must surely be ignorant or he would not have questioned them as he did. They told him that Jesus, whom they regarded as "a prophet mighty in deed and word," not as God in human form, had been crucified and so disappointed their hopes that he was the long promised Messiah. They also told him of the reported appearance of the risen Lord. From the answer they received it is evident that these reported appearances were not to be considered so important as the proper understanding of the significance of the crucifixion. The Christ must needs suffer and enter into his glory. Righteousness, truth, and love must suffer in the world as it is, but the suffering, even death, cannot destroy them. Suffering and death are the pathway to glory. By being faithful unto death Jesus had made his life's work permanent. He had shown that nothing, not even death, could defeat goodness and truth. Moses and the prophets and all the scriptures, rightly understood, teach the same lesson And when they broke bread together they were reminded of the last supper, and of the same teaching which Jesus had then given his disciples.

"The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church." So with all martyrs, those of science and of reform as well as of religion. The men and women who are willing to face death for a good cause are the glory of our race, the proof of the invincibility of truth and goodness, and not the cause of doubt or sadness. John Brown, the abolitionist, for example, whose "body lies a-mould'ring in the grave, but his soul goes marching on."

11th *April. The Spirit of Prayer.* Matthew vii. 7-12. Key text, verse 7.

Nothing is said in this passage about what we pray for, but elsewhere Jesus makes himself clear on this point. "If ye abide in me, and my words in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you." "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name, ask, and ye shall receive." "If ye abide in me," that is, if ye live in his spirit, you can be trusted to ask aright. And to ask in his name means to ask in accordance with his will.

Prayer is not a matter of words only. Ask implies words, seek implies thought, knock implies action. In St. Luke's gospel the commentary is added in the parable of the importunate friend. Prayer that is persistent in word and thought and deed is effective. When we want the things that Jesus wanted

so much that we keep asking for them and thinking about them and working for them, we shall get them. We may not have our prayers answered in exactly the way we hope or expect, but if we are really sincere and persevering we shall eventually get what we want. The hymn

> " Oft when of God we ask
> For fuller, happier life,"

expresses this truth beautifully.

Notice St. Luke's version of " how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him." St. Luke says, " give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." The Holy Spirit is the best gift God can give.

It is significant that ' the Golden Rule ' is introduced at this point. If we have the right spirit in our prayers we shall have the right spirit in our conduct. All the law and the prophets, all religion, is contained in this ' Golden Rule.' The word ' therefore ' connects it with what has gone before. We are to do as we would be done by, not in order that we shall be well treated in turn, but because of God's goodness to us. Because we desire good for ourselves we should give it unto others.

18*th April. The Two Ways.* Matthew vii. 13-20.

Although he came to seek and to save, Jesus never aimed at mere numbers. He would not make disciples under false pretences. There are many instances in the gospels of turning aside eager would-be disciples. The rich young ruler, and the man who wished first to bury his father, for example He wanted every body to realise thoroughly exactly what was involved. It was no easy life to which he called men, but it was the life which is life indeed. So here he tells of the two ways, one easy, the other difficult. To follow our own inclinations, to gratify our appetites and passions, to take the line of least resistance is easy. To rise above self-interest, to have complete mastery over our desires, to be absolutely loyal to righteousness and truth is difficult. Nothing worth the having can be got without effort.

" Few be they that find it." Taken by itself this passage would seem to indicate a poor opinion of the ultimate destiny of the majority of mankind, but it must be taken in conjunction with the whole teaching of Jesus. He taught that God is our Father and believed in the final and universal victory of His Kingdom. Once when the disciples asked him, " Are there few that be saved ? " he answered them, " Strive to enter at the straight gate." In other words, don't worry about the ultimate destiny of mankind as a whole, but make a right choice. So in our lesson Jesus is stating a fact, there are many who are taking the easy path and few that are taking the difficult one. This is true to life, but it is also true that we find out at length which path leads to fulness of life.

False prophets prophesy smooth things, but the proof of the prophesy is in the results, and attainment in morals, in knowledge, in any kind of progress, is only achieved by hard work and discipline. The athlete has to train, great musician has to practise, genius is largely the art of taking pains. Call to mind any really admirable man or woman and you will find that there has been no shirking of difficulties, no choosing of the comfortable and easy way.

25*th April. Saying and Doing.* Matthew vii. 21-27. Key text, verse 21.

The final warning in the Sermon on the Mount is against hypocrisy. It is so much easier to praise Jesus than to follow his example. To be a Christian does not mean to confess his name, to call him Lord and Master, to hold correct views about him, but to have Christ-like character, and to have a Christ-like character means to be like him in doing the will of God. To reverence Jesus is not enough unless we also try to do as he did. Many people speak in his name and are fond of telling others what they ought to do. Many work in his name who are desirous of winning the world's applause. The true Christian takes the teaching to himself and strives to be good, not for gain or applause, but because it is

God's will and because he loves goodness for its own sake.

The final test of the Christian is whether he has the power of enduring the storms of life, and this depends on the foundations of his character. Peter denied Jesus, but his was the rock-like character which could endure the storms and upon him was the Church built. He was at first mistaken, he had many faults, but the root of the matter was in him, he had courage and loyal ty.

And the voice still soundeth on
From the centuries that are gone,
To the centuries that shall be !
From all vain pomps and shows,
From the pride that overflows.
And the false conceits of men ;
From all the narrow rules
And subtleties of Schools,
And the craft of tongue and pen ;
Bewildering in its search,
Bewildered with the cry :
Lo, here ! lo there, the Church !
Poor, sad humanity
Thro· gh all the dust and heat
Turns back with bleeding feet,
By the weary road it came,
Unto the simp·e thought
By the Great Master taught,
And that remaineth still :
Not he that repeateth the name,
But he that doeth the will.

JESUS THE CARPENTER.

If I could hold within my hand
The hammer Jesus swung,
Not all the gold in all the land,
Nor jewels countless as the sand,
All in the balance flung,
Could weigh the value of that thing
Round which His fingers once did cling.

If I could have the table He
Once made in Nazareth,
Not all the pearls in all the sea,
Nor crowns of kings or kings to be,
As long as men have breath,
Could buy that thing of wood He made :
The Lord of lords who learned a trade.

Yea, but His hammer still is shown
By honest hands that toil,
And round His table men sit down,
And all are equals, with a crown,
Nor gold nor pearls can soil ;
The shop at Nazareth was bare—
But brotherhood was builded there.

C. M. SHELDON.

Reports.

Unity Guild.—The Guild is to be congratulated on the steady progress which has marked the dramatic performances from year to year. The entertainment given on the 10th March was in many ways the best that has been produced. The quality of the acting has greatly improved, and the costumes and make-up were far better than in previous years, though the scenery in "Poor Pillicoddy" left much to be desired. It is always pleasant to see new names on the programme, especially when they belong to such capable actresses as Miss M. Neill, of Mountpottinger, whose playing of *Mrs. Jones* was one of the hits of the evening. This old shrew threatens to have the law of *Miss Molly Smith*, who is on a summer camping expedition, unless she immediately pays a bill for butter and eggs, which *Molly* finds it impossible to do, having just had all her money stolen. Her lover, *Sir Anthony Travers*, arrives in the nick of time and saves the situation. Miss L. Hill made a very sweet *Molly*, and Mr. W. M'Crum looked quite the hero of romance as *Sir Anthony*, the first part he has played for the Guild. The love scenes between these two were very prettily done, though it would not have detracted from their charm to have put a little more passion into them. Miss Mona Martin deserves great credit for her performance of *Jane, Molly's* maid. It is impossible to pass over without a word of praise Mr. T. Montgomery's policeman, which was all the more clever, as he had only about a couple of words to say, but he had evidently studied both actions and attitudes very carefully and the bye-play between *Jane* and him was very well done.

This pretty little comedy was followed by the rollicking farce already named. With Mr. R. Martin as *Pillicoddy*, and Mr. H. Erskine as *Captain O'Scuttle*, one naturally expected a good time—nor was one disappointed. They richly deserved the rounds of applause which their performance provoked. Mr. Erskine raged, stamped, and lost his

temper as an indignant and jealous husband should, while his laughter was most infectious. Mr. Martin has the art of saying the most ridiculous things with all the air of spontaneity, and his falling asleep after attempting to poison himself by eating poppy seeds was a fine piece of work. As *Mrs. Pillicoddy*, Miss Ava Montgomery appeared in an entirely new role, and, though she gave a clever interpretation of this inspiring part, the writer thinks he prefers her in that class of part which made her reputation. The only criticism that can be offered of Mrs Jackson's excellent study of *Sarah Blunt* was that it was hardly broad enough; at times she was quite too refined for a typical country servant girl. Miss F. Newman made a dainty and pretty *Mrs. O'Scuttle* in her quaint costume; she was particularly good in the reconciliation scene at the end of the play.

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Ballyclare.—On Thursday, 5th February, we held our usual Annual Social and Business Meeting in the School-room and the Old Meeting-House. There was a large attendance. After an enjoyable tea, Miss Jeanie Nelson presented the children with their annual prizes. Owing to the big programme ahead of songs and recitation the business part of the meeting was short. The minister in his opening address had to refer to four losses from the Congregation since the last General Meeting; but an increased membership, especially in the Sunday School and Bible Class. Evening services had been instituted, and the electric light installed. For the cost of the lighting he hoped subscriptions would meet the bill. The Treasurer, in presenting the balance sheet, referred to the apparent increase of balance, but really due to certain re-arrangement of investments. In reality both the Organ Fund and Sustentation Fund needed more general support. The Church Officers for 1919 were re-elected for 1920. The business being ended, we were prepared for the pleasure. The children gave us action songs, including "Dolly, Dolly" and the "Farmyard Song"; Miss Jeanie Kerr and Miss Nanty Nelson gave us (in costume) a jolly Picanninny duet; Miss Mary Hogarth sang "Danny Boy" and "The Big Moon"; Miss Ethel Hogarth recited; Miss Jeanie Nelson sang; as did also our organist, Mrs. Moore; even our minister, not to be outdone, dressed up for a song as a sailor, and quick-changed for a recitation as "Little Orphant Annie." Altogether, it was a most happy evening, and at the close the choir and ladies were thanked for their untiring efforts in giving such good refreshments, and the artistes for their efforts. The meeting closed with hymn and benediction.

* *

Comber.—The Annual Winter Treat in connection with the Sunday School was held on February 6th. An enjoyable tea was provided. Miss Todd, Miss Galbraith, and Miss Stewart presided at the tables. An entertainment followed, at which some of the scholars, assisted by a few of the younger members of the Congregation, contributed a programme of theatrical performances. The first item was a play, entitled: "Princess Mary and Her Wonderful Law," in which some twenty-three children took part, and they all deserve praise for the splendid manner in which they went through their parts. This was followed by a sketch, entitled: "Our Betty." Six of our elder girls took part, and the applause accorded them testified to the able manner in which they fulfilled their parts. The third item was a humorous sketch, entitled: "Mixem's Marriage Mart." This item caused great merriment among the audience, and the acting was of a very high order. A very full mead of praise is due to Miss Andrews, Miss Herron, and Miss Todd for the efficient way in which all who took part in the plays had been trained. They were well rewarded, we feel sure, by the hearty and appreciative manner in which all the three plays were received by the large audience present. Great credit is due also to the young performers for their true and hearty response to the efforts of their teachers. During an interval in the programme, Mrs. Glynne Davies distributed prizes for good attendance to forty-three

scholars, and in a brief speech commended the prize-winners for their faithfulness, and spoke an appreciative word of the mothers of the children for encouraging them to attend the school regularly and punctually. The Superintendent, Mr. H. P. Andrews, explained that the prizes were well earned, as every scholar had to obtain 90 per cent. marks to qualify for a prize, and such a large number of prizes having been gained spoke well for the attendance. Rev. Glynne Davies, as minister, said that the school was greatly indebted to the teachers for their unfailing loyalty during the year, and referred to the splendid harmony that prevailed among the teachers and of the friendly attachment that existed between them and their scholars. The theatrical entertainment was repeated on February 13th, and the large school-room was packed to its utmost capacity on both occasions. The proceeds from the entertainments amounted to over £19. This sum was handed over to the Sunday School Fund.

The third Lecture of the season in connection with the Young People's Society was given on Wednesday evening, February 18th, in the School-room. There was a very good attendance, and J. Miller Andrews, Esq., D.L., was voted to the chair. The lecturer on this occasion was Mr. Alexander Orr, Ballystockart, one of our own faithful members. His subject was "George Borrow: Author and Traveller." Mr. Orr commenced his lecture with a very interesting sketch of Borrow's career, and then passed on to a review of the author's best known works. He quoted many passages to illustrate Borrow's vivid and vigorous style. Mr. Orr is a Borrow enthusiast, and he held his audience in rapt attention for over an hour. We congratulate our friend on his masterly treatment of his subject, and we sincerely trust that he will address us again in the near future. On the motion of Mr. J. M. Andrews, D.L., seconded by the Rev. J. G. Davies, a hearty vote of thanks was accorded to the lecturer. The proceedings closed with the singing of the National Anthem.

On Friday, February 27th, a very successful Social Entertainment and Dance was held in the Thomas Andrews Junior Memorial Hall in connection with the above Society. The object of the entertainment was to raise money to complete the fund that was opened in the autumn for the purchase of a piano for the school-room. The result was very satisfactory, and, after paying all expenses, the sum of £52 was handed over to the fund. The best thanks are due to all who contributed to the success of the evening, especially to the Secretaries, Messrs. James Niblock and Samuel Davidson.

* *

Holywood.—On Friday, March 12th, a very enjoyable social gathering was held in the Town Hall. About one hundred and twenty members of our congregation and their friends were present and it was generally agreed that the evening was a great success. A Whist Drive occupied the first part of the evening, then followed refreshments, after which the room was cleared for dancing. Everything went well, the only complaint being that time passed too quickly. We are greatly indebted to the many friends who helped in various ways to provide so pleasant an evening, especially to those who were responsible for the music, the prizes, the refreshments, and the cost of the hall.

The Band of Hope, which was started this season in connection with our Total Abstinence Society, held its last meeting for the season on Tuesday, March 16th, when there was a large attendance for a Lantern Entertainment. Mr. W. Harvey, jun., acted as showman, and read the stories, etc., in a clear and impressive manner. The slides and lantern (with operator) were provided by the Irish Temperance League, and were very much appreciated by the children.

* *

Killinchy.—The Annual Meeting of the congregation was held on Thursday night, February 19th. A sumptuous tea was provided by the ladies and a large

gathering thoroughly enjoyed the good things provided. The Rev. D. J. Williams occupied the chair, and gave a hearty welcome to all present and particularly to the visitors who had come to address the meeting, namely, the Rev. J. G. Davies, of Comber, and Mr. Alexander Orr, of Ballystockart. He read a wire from the Rev. J. A. Kelly, who had intended to be present and to take part in the meeting, which explained the cause of his absence as being due to an urgent call from a member of his congregation. The minutes of the last Annual Meeting having been read, confirmed and signed, the meeting proceeded to elect the Committee for the present year, and also the Treasurer and Secretary. The old committee was re-elected, and Messrs. Thos. Lindsay and John Fitchie re-elected Treasurer and Secretary respectively. The business being disposed of, the chairman in an appropriate speech introduced the speakers of the evening, who in the absence of Mr. Kelly were reduced to two; but so well did Messrs. Orr and Davies take the measure of their audience, that interest was maintained and attention remained unflagging to the end. The addresses were designed to stimulate the interest of members in their church, Mr. Orr's well-known zeal for his own church spoke to his audience almost as eloquently as his well-thought out address. His persuasive words and charm of style will long be remembered by his audience. Mr. Davies followed with an eloquent appeal for increased interest in church matters, for more loyal support and increased contributions, especially towards the stipend of the minister. He gave some telling reasons why ministers should be paid more generously than they are. Mr. F. J. Orr who was also present added a few words in a breezy and captivating style which worthily brought the addresses to a close. The balance sheet read during the business part of the proceedings showed an income for 1919 of £277 18s. 5½d. with a balance in hand of £32 18s. 6d., on the year's working. It is gratifying to report that the rise in the minister's stipend totals £34 16s. 7d. As a finish to a successful evening a capital programme was provided, contributed to by the following: Miss E. Kelly, Miss Russell, Miss Lizzie Hay, Miss Sarah Morrow, Misses Osborne, Misses McCormick, and the Rev. J. G. Davies. An enjoyable meeting was brought to a close at a late hour by the singing of the National Anthem, and the pronouncing of the Benediction by the minister.

* *

Larne.—The Annual Business and Social Meeting of the above was held on the evening of March 4, and was very well attended. Giving precedence to business over pleasure, the minister took the chair, and called on the Hon. Secretary, Mr. S. Magill, to read the Annual Statement of the General Purposes Committee, which, with the short Summary of Accounts read by Mr. D. A. Nelson, Treasurer, was ordered to be printed and circulated among the members. The Secretary, in the course of his further observations, mentioned that when it was first proposed to print a stipend list the latter included only 163 names. Now it numbers 220. He urged that grown-up members of families should qualify to have their names appearing on the list with the names of heads of families. He also spoke of a lecture delivered where they were then assembled by the late Sir Andrew Marshall Porter, Master of the Rolls, in which the learned gentleman spoke of the likelihood of the sovereign depreciating enormously in purchasing power, and a great advance in prices of the necessities, as well as the luxuries, of life. Unfortunately, Sir Andrew's predictions had been abundantly verified. Prices had risen enormously, and were still soaring, and likely to do so further in the near future. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland had held several sectional meetings, at which it was resolved that Congregations should double their stipends. And this he (Mr. Magill) commended to the sympathetic consideration of their members, to do of their own free will, and without any semblance of pressure from any quarter whatever. The establishment of the

Unity Guild has proved a happy departure from routine, bringing adult members into friendly association with each other, and so promoting and encouraging applied Christianity. The Secretary also referred in feeling terms to the inevitable sad tales of death and bereavement, especially the very sudden passing of Mr. John Drummond, a most faithful member, regular in his attendance at public worship, and helpful in all benevolent and useful efforts in which the Congregation engaged, and who bequeathed us as a token of his love the sum of £100, the interest of which he directed to be added to the income of the minister and his successors. The Ladies' Working Committee, as usual, were prepared for the August Feté, Sale of Work, etc., and were as successful as of yore. The Secretary, Treasurer, and General Purposes Committee, as well as stipend collectors, etc., having been appointed, tea was served, after which the Unity Guild became responsible for the remainder of the evening, and submitted an excellent programme, consisting of songs by Miss Greenfield, Miss Kinder gracefully accompanying; two songs by Rev. Mr. Watkins, Belfast; recitation by Mr. D. A. Nelson; songs, including the ever-popular "Father O'Flynn," by Mr. Hugh Hill; songs by Miss M'Clure; musical monologue by Mr. Tuck, Mr. Holmes, organist, accompanying on the piano. Needless to say, all were encored. The choir gave in fine style as opening and closing choruses "The Meeting of the Waters" and "The Dear Little Shamrock," Mr. Holmes accompanying in truly artistic style. The evening concluded with a little indulgence in the "Poetry of Motion."

On the evening following that on which the Annual Business and Social Meeting was held, a still more enthusiastic one of Sunday School and Band of Hope members was held in the same place. A plentiful and luxurious tea was provided by Mr. Frank Wright, the Superintendent, and generally dispensed by his teachers—the Misses Moore, Bailie, Beth M'Ninch, Crawford, M'Kee, Steele, Bryans, M'Keown, and Mr. Holden Canning. Mr. Ralph Hay's orchestra was in attendance, including the Misses Hay, Moffet, and Birkmyre, with Messrs. Kirkpatrick and Brownlees. These ladies and gentlemen discoursed exhilerating music liberally—concerted selections, with solos—vocal and instrumental, Mr. Brownlees contributing a much appreciated song and two solos on the flute. Miss M'Clure gave with much sweetness the song, "I passed by your window." Encored. Mr. S. Magill, after a brief address to children and teachers, repeated by request his reading from Tom Hood with much compelling humour as in days of yore, justifying the reputation by sundry sly references to a certain minister who unb'ushingly repeats his sermons. He did not, however, go the length of saying that sermons, like good wine, improve by keeping. A very juvenile performer, Miss Nance Huxley, recited with emphasis and expression "Flo's Letters." But the item of the evening was a song by an old scholar, Miss Madge Steele, which fairly brought down the house and exacted an encore, replete with Scotch or Scotch-Irish humour. The programme opened and closed with choruses, viz.—"The Meeting of the Waters" and "The Harp That Once," sweetly rendered by a band of school girls, led on the piano by Miss Moore, of Larne Infant School. Before the last item, the minister solemnly and strictly reminded his young friends of their pledged word to abstain from strong drink and tobacco until 21 years of age, and postponed the enrolment of new members, the evening being now far advanced. He then distributed book prizes for good and punctual attendance in the year 1919, viz.—"The Life of Savanarola," or "William Lloyd Garrison," or the "Sunday School Helper," two to each of the senior classes, with more trifling but more bright colouring *souvenirs* to each child in the two junior classes. And, like the Guild folks on the previous evening, the bigger scholars enjoyed for a brief season a little of the "poetry of motion," and so concluded as pleasant a meeting as ever was held.

Mountpottinger.—The Annual Meeting of the Congregation was held on February 26th, in the schoolroom, Rev. M. Watkins presiding over an excellent attendance. The Committee's report showed that the attendances at both Church and Sunday School had been maintained, and were of an improving character. The Financial Statement was of a satisfactory character, as it showed a credit balance of £76 18s. 0d. The Officers were re-elected, together with a Committee, which should prove eminently suitable for carrying on the work. The Chairman explained in a lucid manner the objects of the recently inaugurated "War Memorial and Endowment Fund," and called for the hearty co-operation of all the Church Members in connection with same. He announced that up to that evening promises and payments had been received to the extent of £445 0s. 0d. The Meeting appointed Trustees to deal with this Fund, and it was stated that arrangements were being made to hold a two-days' Bazaar in April, 1921, for the purpose of ensuring as far as possible the ultimate success of the undertaking. Following the business light refreshments were served and a short musical programme rendered.

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